WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 NOVEMBER 1987

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

SCHOOL FETES 150 YEARS AND THEN SOME, IDENTITY PERSISTS THROUGH FOUR BUILDINGS, TWO SYSTEMS

Carpenter Elementary School, now part of Ann Arbor Public Schools, celebrated the sesquicentennial of its official beginning Saturday, October 24.

WCHS added its congratulations by presenting a framed anniversary certificate at the ceremonies.

The official beginning was May 22, 1837, when three township school inspectors laid out one-room districts in the township then known at Pitt. The Carpenter area was designated District No. 1. (The township became "Pittsfield" in 1840).

Over the years four buildings in different locations have borne the name Carpenter School. They were named for Ezra Carpenter who first settled Carpenter's Corners (Packard and Carpenter Roads) in April 1826.

Actually children from the Carpenter area earlier attended the first school in the county in the fall of 1825 at the Mallett's Creek settlement along with children from the Stone School area. (A joint Carpenter-Stone centennial was celebrated in 1925).

According to the 1987 sesquincentennial booklet, the first log school house in the county was on the south side of Packard near Fernwood, about 7/10 mile west of Carpenter.

Ten years later the first Carpenter school is thought to have been on the east side of Carpenter south of Packard. The second Carpenter, built in 1854, was across from the first and the third brick one, built in 1914, south of the 1854 school, is now known as Ozzie's Furniture Store.

The present school was erected in 1952 in a built-up area east of Carpenter Road and south of Packard at Dayton and Central. It was annexed to Ann Arbor Public Schools in 1959.

Pittsfield township has remarkably good records. Mary Campbell, chairman of the Pittsfield Historical Society, furnished us with a copy of the 1837 record of the school inspectors' work which is on file at the town hall.

The inspectors were Horace Carpenter, son of Ezra; Alanson Doty and Alvah Pratt. They met at the home of John Hoy, township clerk, on Michigan Avenue.

The new state had acted to organize public schools March 20th. At the annual town meeting April 3 the special election of school inspectors was set May 13. They did their job nine days later.

Actually, Michigan, impatient to get on with statehood, had elected state officers in 1835 and had a law requiring four township school inspectors, already chosen.

But because a law passed by the new officially recognized state specified *three* inspectors, the special election was held.

The school inspectors reported to the county clerk in October 1837 for the previous year that there were five schools in Pitt and four fractional districts (with parts in other townships). The October 1838 report listed seven districts. District 1, Carpenter, had 58 youngsters 5-17 years and District 2, Stone, had 44.

COUNTRY CHRISTMAS, ANTIQUE SHOW SET

Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard, will be decorated Victorian style for Country Christmas, Saturday and Sunday, December 5 & 6, 12-4 p.m., while an antique show will be held Sunday across the street at the Ann Arbor Junior Academy from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Cobblestone Farm is owned by the City of Ann Arbor which sponsors the show while Country Christmas is sponsored by the CF Association, a volunteer group. Both events will benefit the "farm."

A3PA PLANNING CLINICS

Ann Arbor Area Preservation Alliance meets at 7 p.m. the first Sunday of the month at Kempf House. They are planning a series of old house clinics next year.

WILLOW RUN BOMBER PLANT TO BE MS. REPS' TOPIC NOVEMBER 15

Early in World War II a rural area near Ypsilanti with a meandering stream called Willow Run was transformed shortly into a huge bomber plant turning out a B-24 airplane every hour around the clock.

Flavia P. Reps, a history teacher at Washtenaw Community College, will show a slide tape about the history of the Willow Run Bomber plant to WCHS at 2 p.m. Sunday, November 15, at the Ann Arbor American Legion.

Ms. Reps conducted a long-term oral history study entitled "The Impact of World War II on Willow Run." She sought interviews with any persons who had had any connection with the plant or the area. The slide-tape show was made from the study.

Ms. Reps, who has a master's in history from Georgetown University, came to WCC when it first opened in 1966 in temporary quarters in the old Willow Village buildings. That gave her the idea for the study.

'WHAT IS IT' GAME AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS

WCHS offers a traveling exhibit of small artifacts set up as a humorous "What is it" game for children to schools and another for adults.

They are available for classes and meetings, subject to time and volunteer availability. For information call Karen O'Neal, chairwoman, 665-2242.

NEW SCREEN TO BE USED

The new WCHS 60 by 60 inch lenticular movie-slide screen, exhibited at the October meeting, will be put to use in November.

It was obtained free of charge through Bill Knapp's Restaurants' Community Support Program and Big George's Home Appliance Mart which discounted the regular price ten percent.

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

WHERE TONQUISH, POTOWATOMIS USED TO ROAM

Michigan is celebrating its sesquicentennial as a state this year but there was a lot of history here before the event of January 26, 1837, Helen Gilbert, Plymouth author of *Tonquish Tales* pointed out to the October WCHS audience.

"Let's go back to the Huron River and Ann Arbor in 1673. In canoes, passing along the river on the way back from a trip to as far as Cahokia (Illinois, near St. Louis, Missouri) we see La Salle and Fr. Hennepin.

"We know they were cruising along there because Fr. Hennepin spoke of the old secret Indian well that's still there today.

"I was privileged to walk the campus of Concordia College with several Concordia teachers and it was pointed out to me that this was the place where La Salle probably landed because, if he wanted fresh water, he would probably get it from the Indian spring here.

"We walked to the brink of the Huron River and looked down in the hollows and that spring is still flowing.

"We know from the records of the old settlers that the John Geddes farm, across the river from Concordia and from which Geddes Road took its name, was a center of Indian gathering places from time immemorial.

"Did you know that on Dixboro Road near the former Edison plant (at the dam), Professor (Wilbert B.) Hindsdale and a group of U-M anthropologists explored the mound that was there. That mound was one of many scattered along the Huron River.

"I was told by the professors at Concordia College that there were mounds on the grounds in the old days.

"I knew there was an old Indian civilization here in theory but I didn't come to realize it clearly until I was called to a digging in Plymouth on Ann Arbor Trail, across from Plymouth Township Park.

"Ann Arbor Trail is the old trail to the Ann Arbor mounds used by the Indians over and over.

"We called the University of Michigan on this discovery. Professor (John M.) O'Shea and a crew from the anthropology department

came and worked there all one day. They found seven heads. It was a bundle burial typical of ancient Indian rituals.

"I was there when the heads were taken out of the ground. I have read a lot about the Indians along the Huron River and in this Ann Arbor-Plymouth-Canton area but to actually see those people being dug up—it was amazing.

"In *Tonquish Tales,* Volume 2, there are pictures at the dig, she said, "and you have my story of it which is a speculation."

"Really, we do not know because we're dealing with people who had no written language. They didn't leave us any papers to tell us what happened. I am not an Indian. I'm a Scottish-Irish-Danish-Dutch All-American miscellaneous girl.

"I stand before you as someone who is exploring, a learner, not so much as a teacher. If I had stood before my journalism classes with as little knowledge of the real Indians as I do standing here before you, the class would have said, 'We're sorry. Go back to school.'

"Did you know that in this area the old Indians were Algonquin? They include Chippewa or Ojibwa which is the same thing—Chippewa to the English, Ojibwa to the French—Ottawa and Potowatomi. Algonquin is a language group. They could understand each other's dialects.

"There were many Potowatomis is this area and in the old days, Hurons, who were not Algonquin. The river here is named for an Iroquoisan tribe who were driven here by fierce fighting of the Seneca, Tuscarora and other New York Indians.

"We have in the Indian race a mixture. Not all Potowatomis. for example, are all Potowatomi. They think there's a great mixture of Chippewa in them.

"In Volume 1 we have a lovely picture that is supposed to represent Chief Tonquish. There really is no p o

picture of Chief Tonquish, his portrait was never painted.

"But the young lady who did this (Michele Gauthier of St. Jose Michigan) was very careful to get a living Chippewa in Detroit who had all the earmarks of the old Chips in facial features and appearance.

"People have asked me, 'Why do you write about Indians if you are not Indian?'

"I have lived on the banks of Tonquish Creek for 70 years. I have lived history for the past seven years and I know that there's a lot there of interest to all of us.

"Indians are fascinating, hard to get to know. The last reservation in this area is out near Athens (south of Battle Creek). I'm talking about official reservations. The Chips have a great reservation up near Saginaw.

"The Athens reservation has dwindled down to about 125 acres. I have been over there to visit them. Its a difficult situation for them. I have never seen anything so pitiful in my life as the remnant of those Potowatomi-Chippewas living in hovels there.

"We feel that the Ann Arbor area was a place where the Indians moved through. In the old days, you know, the river was the road and there were trails through the forest—the old Sauk Trail, the Potowatomi Trail, the trail that went to Saginaw or Saukin-aw and the Grand River Trail. Even the white settlers had to rely on the trails through a dense forest.

Many of you know Plymouth, so you are aware there's a Tonquish Creek, Tonquish Plain, Tonquish Manor retirement home and a Tonquish Lodge.

"In 1819 one of the settlers along the Rouge River near the fort in Dearborn, Alanson Thomas, recognized the neighborhood chief, old Chief Tonquish or Toga as he was commonly known, pushing his way in to his cabin and demanding firewater."

Thomas ordered him out. This enraged Toga and he sprang at Thomas as if to kill him. With one blow Thomas knocked him senseless.

In the band of Indians who witnessed it, only the chief's only son, Toga, assisted his father and threatened Thomas, "Bimby you be dead. Bimby, Thomas dead."

"Although the Thomases lived in fear for a decade, Toga and his clan never bothered them again," she wrote.

"This is not a made-up story unless the memory of the old fellow writing for the *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* years ago was not perfect. He may have been exaggerating a bit, but in this book, when I exaggerate or tell you something that may not be perfectly honest, I am careful to say 'Let us imagine.' or 'Let us assume' or 'perhaps'.

"A friend of mine said, 'Helen, how do you face the fact that all of your lies are engraved in the Library of Congress?'

"I said, my dear, I tell the truth as I see it, as I researched it.

Another day, in the fall of 1819, Tonquish, his son and some others were out foraging for food. A Mrs. Sargent was a great bread baker and the aroma of her fresh-baked bread wafted over the Rouge River to their canoe, she said.

"Quickly beaching their canoes near the Sargents they rushed into the cabin, appropriated all the bread and quickly left."

Mr. Sargent returned home as they were leaving, and plunged into the stream and retrieved some of the loaves. "Just as he crossed the threshold of his little home, Toga's son shot him dead."

"It was not at all unusual for Indians to forage for food like that in those days. Of course the settlers were terrified.

"I remember my grandmother who was a pioneer in Oakland County telling my mother of the Indians who came out along the old Grand Rapids trail.

"My grandparents were millers on the west shore of Kent Lake. Their name was Stephenson and the Stephenson Mill seemed to be a gathering place for these people about twice a year.

"And these Indians were aggressive and dangerous and, believe me, the Stephenson's fed them and fed them quite well according to the story I have.

"Of course you know the old Grand River Trail was used by the Indians in the old days when they would take their furs down to barter at the fort in Detroit where, as you know, in 1701 Cadillac arrived. From then on fur collecting and selling was a major industry.

After the above incidents, the militia from Grosse Ile came with their ponies and guns and made an end to old Tonquish, she said. It took place near Nankin Mills.

"This story is well authenticated, although in the *Michigan Pioneer and History Collections* there are three versions of the death of Tonquish. I have selected the one that was also the one selected by the history commission of Lansing as being most authentic.

"If you go out Wayne Road just south of the end of Joy Road there is a state historic marker about Chief Tonquish.

"Tonquish's land began along Grand River Road at the end of Orchard Lake Road and ran as far south as Palmer Street in Detroit and as far west as Sheldon according to the Treaty of 1809 signed by him.

"He was granted exclusive hunting rights in this large territory. Of course these treaties had little meaning to Indians because they had no concept whatever of ownership in the white man's sense. It was more of a sharing.

"Tonquish himself signed at least three different treaties so we know he was doing it in a lighthearted way. He probably thought here's where I get some more firewater. Here's where I smoke the pipe with these people and maybe they will leave me alone for another year.

She said Professor Hinsdale wrote a couple of the best books ever published about Michigan Indians, *Archeological Atlas of Michigan,* 1931, and *The First People of Michigan,* 1938.

She read a selection from Volume I about the old shaman (medicine man) of the Tonquish:

> Alone on his tired, little Indian pony, limping along Pontiac's ancient trail (the old Pontiac Trail that runs into Ann Arbor), the last shaman (medicine man) of the Tonquish Potowatomi pondered his plight.
>
> Yesterday a paleface governor of this territory had tried to buy the shaman's influence; tried to force him to direct his people's thoughts toward a new land in the far west. (This was done over and over again, so I'm safe in saying he was a Tonquish shaman, because, of course, they had contact with the shaman and, of course, they were being influenced.) The paleface had threatened much and promised little, and the old shaman was greatly worn by the pressure of his own conflicting thoughts.
>
> "Near the intersection of Grand River Trail and the path to Silver Lake, not far from the old Stephenson Mill at Kent Lake, an area known today as New Hudson, he turned his pony eastward toward the white settlements. He wanted to see what had happened to his old stamping ground along the Middle Rouge.
>
> The shaman had heard of many changes there. Other duties had kept him away from Tonquish Plain for almost six months. Now, in December 1819, he was responding to the call of Toga's people to install their new chief.
>
> "And I describe the ceremony of the installation."

In answer to a question, she agreed that the local Indians were partly farmers as well as hunter's and trappers, but they didn't farm as we know farming and they were wanderers.

The women did the farm work and they weren't very scientific. As long as the ground was fertile, they could plant their corn and squash and beans in little garden patches.

All would go out on a winter hunt except a few old squaws and old

men who couldn't travel and they would tend the place.

In the western part of the state, they have flown over land and mapped it and they have seen acre after acre of old Indian farm ground patterns. They have also seen evidence of a complicated irrigation system they brought in from the St. Joseph River.

Heloise Dunstan said there were Indian mounds in Webster township. Miss Gilbert said that there are three or four mounds along the Huron River near Concordia College. There are mounds at Grand Rapids and a small museum showing things from some of the mounds. Others there have never been disturbed, she said.

"Did you know that the Rouge steel mill rests on the greatest mound along the Detroit River? she asked.

"Across the river the Indians played a game called la crosse. To the Indians it was a life and death matter. They would sometimes play for two to three days. It was part of the Shaman prayer in some tribes to go, after death, to where they could play la crosse."

Tonquish Tales, **Volumes 1 and 2, by Helen Frances Gilbert are available in local bookstores or from Pilgrim Heritage Press, P.O. Box 473, Plymousth, Michigan 48170. Volume 1 is subtitled "A story of early d'Etroit, pioneers and Michigan Indians." Volume 2 is subtitled "A story of the struggle for d'Etroit and the Ohio Valley."**

HOW TO JOIN WCHS

Send name, address and phone number with check or money order payable to Washtenaw County Historical Society to Pauline Walters, 2200 Fuller Road, B-1202, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Information: 663-2379 evenings/weekends.

Annual dues are $8 for individuals, $15 a couple. Senior individual (60) dues are $6, or $11 a senior couple. Sustaining dues are $50, commercial $25 and student $2. Only one of a couple need be 60 to qualify for senior membership status.

DR. HINSDALE'S MICHIGAN ARCHEOLOGY ATLAS MAPS INDIAN SITES, NOTES FINDS IN LOCAL MOUNDS

Dr. Wilbert B. Hinsdale writes in the *Archeological Atlas of Michigan,* 1931, that some Indian mounds in Ann Arbor township overlooked the river from a high bank.

An adult male skeleton was exhumed from one along with two pieces of pottery of the Algonquin type and numerous artifacts including some of copper.

One pot contained hundreds of seashells that archeologists said were from the Gulf of Mexico. The other contained a beaver skeleton. Both were of six quart capacity.

Several skeletons of adults and children were found about a mile northeast of the first mentioned mound in a low mound sixty feet in diameter. It also contained pottery, fire stones and many kinds of implements.

An eight-gallon pot, "a very remarkable size," was reportedly found at the salt "works" near the river in Saline.

At Portage Lake in pioneer times, a row of stepping stones crossed the river about 80 yards below the outlet at about the Dexter-Webster township line.

Dr. Hinsdale noted that important trails traversed the county and that once the Wyandots (Hurons) had a village at Ypsilanti.

From a larger map in *The Indians of Washtenaw County, Michigan,* 1927, by Dr. Hinsdale, some of the sites can be more closely located by section number. Not all sites on the 1931 map shown here on page 5, however, are on the earlier map.

The earlier map shows villages in Ypsilanti city (section 9?); Ypsilanti township, section 22, northeast (NE) part; Pittsfield, section 27 NE; and Saline, section 1, SW.

The 1927 map shows burying grounds in Ypsilanti township section 5 SE, and Saline section 12 NE at line with Section 11.

Mounds are shown in Ann Arbor township section 26 SE at line with section 35, and two in section 25, SW, one at line with section 36. Two others are shown in Scio section 23 SE and Webster section 35, north central part.

DR. HINSDALE CHANGED CAREER IN MID-LIFE

Educators and futurists tell us that people in the future will have to expect to change careers, perhaps several times, in a lifetime.

Dr. Wilbert Bartlett Hinsdale who became known for his study of Indians in later life is an example of one who was forced to change careers in the 1920s and did so successfully.

Dr. Hinsdale, a graduate of the Cleveland Homeopathic Medical College in 1887, came to the University of Michigan as dean of the Homeopathic Medical College in 1895.

The college had had a long, rocky history at the U-M. For years the Legislature pressured the U-M to maintain study of homeopathy as well as the regular (allopathic) medical school according to Howard Peckham in *The Making of the University of Michigan.*

But in 1921 the Legislature reversed itself and advised the U-M to consolidate the two medical schools for economic reasons. It was closed June 30, 1922, and Dr. Hinsdale was out of a job. But he made his hobby, the study of Indians, into his profession.

He became affiliated with the Division of the Great Lakes of the U-M Museum of Anthropology and published several books on Indians.

One of his students, Emerson F. Greenman, earned the U-M's first Ph.D. in anthropology and became a member of the faculty according to Mary Campbell who talked with Emerson Greenman, Jr., who lives in Ann Arbor.

'COULDN'T CATCH UP'

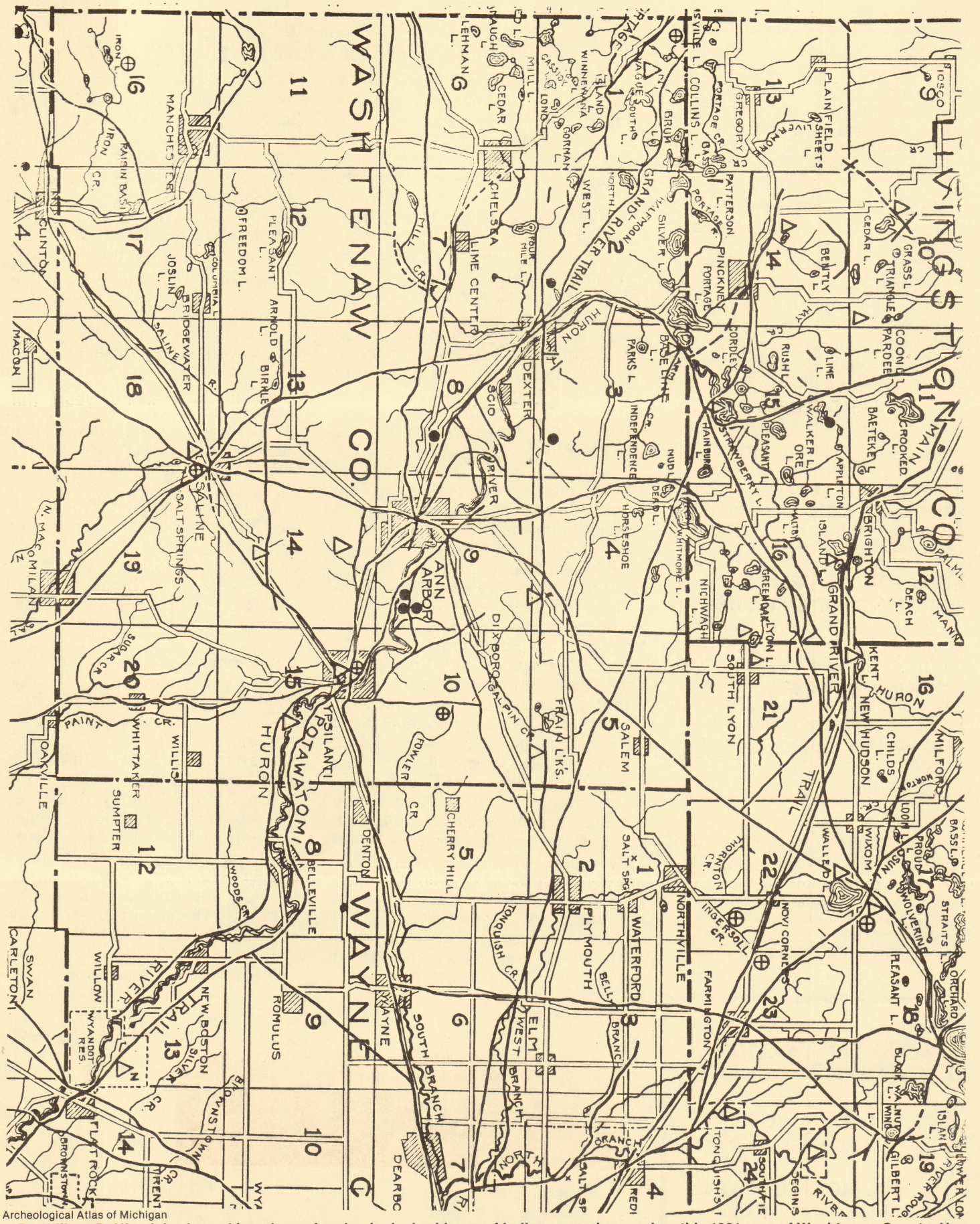
"Owner of garage to applicant for job as mechanic: 'Have you had any mechanical experience with automobiles?'

"Applicant: 'Sure thing. Why, I'm the guy who used to put Part No. 453 on all the cars in the Ford factory.'

"Garage Owner: 'How did you happen to lose your job?'

"Applicant: 'Just a little hard luck, sir. I dropped my monkeywrench one day, and by the time I had stopped to pick it up I was sixteen cars behind.'"

From *Ford Smiles: All The Best Current Jokes About A Rattling Good Car,* by Carleton B. Case, Shrewesbury Publishing Company, Chicago, 1917.



Archeological Atlas of Michigan

Dr. Wilbert B. Hinsdale showed locations of archeological evidence of Indians superimposed on this 1931 map of Washtenaw County. He shows eight Indian village sites, four burying gounds and six mounds as well as Indian trails (solid or broken lines where less certain). Villages are marked with triangles, mounds with solid dots and burying grounds with a cross in a circle. The village site in Lyndon township (1) is labeled "vague". Salt springs are noted near Saline. Frain's Lake is misplaced in Salem instead of Superior township on this map.

GENEALOGISTS TO SHARE FAMILY TRADITIONS

The Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County will have its annual "Family Tradition" meeting at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, December 6, in the Sunshine Room at Glacier Hills Retirement Home, 1200 Earhart Road.

Members are asked to share special family traditions and stories, holiday or other, and bring a "traditional" food to serve for refreshments.

Two local persons who have made substantial contributions to genealogy will be awarded certificates issued by the Michigan Genealogy Council.

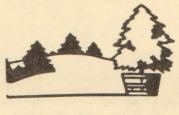
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR

The next WCHS meeting and the next *Impressions* will be in February, 1988. The meeting is scheduled at 2 p.m. Sunday, February 21, at the Ann Arbor American Legion. The program will be announced later.

KEMPF HOUSE PLANS CAROLING, OPEN HOUSE

Local florists will decorate Kempf House, 312 South Division, for Christmas and a caroling party is scheduled there at 7:30 p.m. Friday, December 4.

The house will be open to visitors December 5-6, 12-14. Group tours by appointment—call Linda Monk, 665-8345.



Editor: Alice Ziegler, 663-8826
Address: 537 Riverview, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Keylining: Lawrence Ziegler
Mailing: Elizabeth Dusseau, 662-5334
Published September-May except December & January.

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2:00 P.M. SUNDAY
November 15, 1987

AMERICAN LEGION
1035 South Main
Ann Arbor, Michigan

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS INVOLVE:
CHRISTMAS, ANTIQUES AND A TENANT WANTED

Chelsea Historical Society: 7:30 p.m. second Monday in Crippen Building at Methodist Home. No meeting in December. Dave Pastor has been named to the board vacancy caused by the death of Harold Jones.

Dexter Society: Christmas bazaar, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, December 5 at the museum, 3443 Inverness. Potluck supper and tree trimming party Thursday, November 19.

Dexter will glow beginning at 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve when the Society sponsors the third annual luminaria project. The Society gets the materials together, participating households pay a modest fee.

Earl Doletzky, Dexter school board member 20-some years, will speak on the evolution of the Dexter school district at 8 p.m. Thursday, January 7 at the museum.

Museum open 1-4 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays to mid-December, then closes for the season.

Manchester Society: In observance of the bicentennial of the U.S. constitution this year, the Society will hear Barbara Vacarro, assistant director of the State of Michigan Law Library, talk about the constitution at 7:30 p.m. Monday, November 16, at the Blacksmith Shop, 324 East Main.

Christmas carol sing and cookie sale, with proceeds to charity, Monday, December 21, place to be announced.

Milan Society: The Society received a $500 grant from a Lutheran Insurance Company and volunteers from St. Paul's Lutheran Church to help repair porches at Hack House. The church will furnish as many volunteers as the Society does to do the work.

The Society is seeking a historically minded tenant or tenants to live at Hack House for modest rent. For information call Judy Mulder, 439-2856.

Pittsfield Society: No December meeting. January through May meetings at 2 p.m. the first Sunday at Township Hall, State and Ellsworth Roads.

Salem Society: 7:30 p.m. Thursday, November 19, at Gallery West, the former Congregational Church at Salem. Topic: Underground railroad. January 22 program, slides of horse drawn vehicles. Wassil Christmas party Saturday, December 19, place to be announced.

Saline Society: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, November 29, antique market, "Christmas in Saline," at Union School, McKay and North Ann Arbor Streets, one block north of Michigan Avenue. About 30 booths expected. Food available. Admission, $2.

Webster Society: 7:45 p.m. first Monday. Christmas party, December 7, place to be announced. Election of officers, January 4 meeting.

Ypsilanti Society: Christmas open house at museum, 220 North Huron, 2-5 p.m. Sunday, December 13, 7-9 p.m. Thursday, Friday, December 17, 18. Victorian Christmas decor, toys and Marge Gauntlett's dolls on display. Museum also open 2-4 p.m. Friday-Sunday to December 20, then closed until after holidays.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S Postage
PAID
Permit No. 96
Ann Arbor, MI

Ypsilanti Museum
220 North Huron Street
Ypsilanti MI 48197